



Press Release



**Congressman John Conyers, Jr.
Michigan, 14th District**

**Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

www.house.gov/judiciary_democrats/index.html

For Immediate Release:
May 19, 2005

Contact: Danielle Brown
(202) 225 1294

**REP. CONYERS INTRODUCES RESOLUTION
CONDEMNING RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE**

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, issued the following statement today upon introduction of a House Resolution Condemning Religious Intolerance and Bigotry and recognizing that holy books of every religion should be treated with dignity and respect. In the wake of recent disturbing news reports, Rep. Conyers, joined by Reps. Jackson Lee, Eshoo, Filner, Kucinich, Meehan, Pascrell, and Serrano, introduced this legislation to assert that religious intolerance of any kind is neither an American value, nor the policy of the U.S. Government.

“So much of American history is defined by our national commitment to tolerate each others’ religious differences. This was the wisdom behind the words of President John Kennedy, who reminded us that ‘tolerance implies no lack of commitment to one’s own beliefs. Rather it condemns the oppression or persecution of others.’

I introduce this Resolution today as a reminder that we must still strive to condemn bigotry and religious intolerance, and recognize that holy books of every religion should be treated with dignity and respect. Our dedication to this struggle has never been more important than it is today, with recent events both at home and abroad. We can begin to fulfill this obligation with a renewed effort to continued education and the dispelling of stereotypes.

For example, much of the public is not aware that the word Islam comes from the Arabic root word meaning "peace" and "submission." Terrorism cannot be justified under any valid interpretation of the Islamic faith. There are an estimated 7 million Muslims in America, from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. The holy book of Islam, the Quran, is recited by Muslims during prayer. From the Quran, Muslims learn valuable lessons about peace, humanity and spirituality.

This Resolution recognizes that believers of all religions, including the faiths of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, should be treated with respect and dignity. The mistreatment of prisoners and disrespect toward the holy book of any religion is unacceptable and against civilized humanity. I am concerned as anyone that our nation would disparage the Quran or the Muslim Religion. This Resolution therefore makes it clear that it is not the official policy of the U.S. government to disparage the Quran, Islam or any other faith. I hope this Resolution will help us recognize that we need to embrace the Muslim People and tolerance if we are truly interested in supporting democracy around the world.”

##JUD-109-05/19/05##